

Message Text

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ACTION EB-03

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 L-01 INR-05 DODE-00 CIAE-00 EA-06

/030 W

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R 180811Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2935

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 6717

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAIR, TH

SUBJ: CIVAIR: CONSULTATIONS

REF: STATE 78260

1. ON APRIL 17 ECONOMIC COUNSELOR DELIVERED NOTE TO MFA'S DIRECTOR GENERAL OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS (SAKOL) CONFIRMING USG WILLINGNESS TO CONSULT IN BANGKOK MAY 19-23 (COPY POUCHED). NOTE ALSO STATED USG CONSIDERS RTG DISAPPROVAL OF PAA SCHEDULES TO BE VIOLATION OF BILATERAL CIVAIR AGREEMENT, AND PROPOSED RTG APPROVE SCHEDULES PENDING RESULTS OF UPCOMING TALKS. (ON APRIL 11, AT EMBASSY'S URGING, PAA REP HAD ASKED MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS UNDER-SECRETARY SIRILAK TO APPROVE SCHEDULES, AT LEAST AS INTERIM MEASURE; SIRILAK LAUGHED.)

2. SAKOL, WHO IS NOT RPT NOT WELL VERSED IN JARGON OF AVIATION AGREEMENTS, DID NOT DEFEND RTG ACTION ON SCHEDULES, BUT SAID RTG OFFICIALS BELIEVE USG HAS VIOLATED SPIRIT OF AGREEMENT IN REFUSING TO GRANT RTG ADDITIONAL ROUTE RIGHTS. THIS LED TO UNPRODUCTIVE BUT STILL AMICABLE DISCUSSION OF RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER AGREEMENT, WHICH ENDED WITH SAKOL'S ADMISSION MFA PLAYS ONLY SPECTATOR ROLE IN RTG AVIATION POLICY DECISIONS. HE ADDED IT IS HIS PERSONAL IMPRESSION RTG DECISION-MAKERS ARE PREPARED TO DENOUNCE THE CIVAIR AGREEMENT AND TO "GO TO THE END" IN QUEST OF
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NEW ROUTE RIGHTS, IF US DELEGATION COMES TO BANGKOK WITH

SAME PACKAGE OFFERED LAST NOVEMBER.

3. SAKOL STRESSED THAT HIS WORDS SHOULD BE REGARDED NOT AS A "THREAT", BUT RATHER AS CONSIDERED JUDGEMENT, AND RECOMMENDED THAT USG DECLINE TO CONSULT RATHER THAN ENTER INTO TALKS IN WHICH THERE IS NO HOPE OF MUTUALLY SATISFACTORY RESULT. HE IMPLIED, HOWEVER, THAT RTG ACTIONS AGAINST US AIRLINES FOLLOWING USG REFUSAL TO CONSULT WOULD BE SAME AS THOSE FOLLOWING UNSUCCESSFUL TALKS.

4. ECON COUNSELOR SAID HE APPRECIATED RECEIVING SAKOL'S VIEWS, AND ASKED HIM TO OUTLINE NATURE OF "SATISFACTORY RESULT" FROM RTG POINT OF VIEW. SAKOL ADMITTED HE DID NOT KNOW BASIS ON WHICH RTG WAS PREPARED TO SETTLE, BUT SAID RTG CIVAIR OFFICIALS CONSIDER USG AVIATION AUTHORITIES "STINGY" AND "UNREASONABLE", AND IMPLIED THAR RTG CIVAIR AUTHORITIES HAVE CABINET MANDATE TO WIND UP NEXT ROUND OF TALKS WITH MORE ROUTE RIGHTS FOR THAILAND OR FEWER FREQUENCIES FOR US AIRLINES AND IF SITUATION CALLS FOR IT, THAI NEGOTIATORS WOULD HAVE AUTHORITY TO ABROGATE AGREEMENT. ECON COUNSELOR EXPRESSED HOPE TWO GOVERNMENTS COULD REACH REASONABLE SOLUTION TO CIVAIR PROBLEM.

5. IN SEPARATE CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF EVENING APRIL 17, DR. SRISOOK OF MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS SAID FLATLY GUAM-TOKYO ROUTE FOR RTG IS PRIVE USG MUST PAY TO RETAIN EXISTING LEVEL OF BANGKOK SERVICES. HE ADDED THAI INTER AND AIR SIAM HAVE DEMANDED RTG ACCORD THEM GREATER REVENUE OPPORTUNITIES, AND FOR RTG BASIC OPTIONS ARE (1) ACCESS TO TOKYO-GUAM FIFTH FREEDOM TRAFFIC FOR AIR SIAM OR (2) INHERITANCE OF US AIRLINES' FIFTH FREEDOM TRAFFIC ON BANGKOK-HONG KONG-TOKYO FOR AIR SIAM AND THAI INTER BY SHARPLY RESTRICTING US AIRLINES FREQUENCIES THROUGH BANGKOK.

6. SRISOOK ALSO SAID RTG IS DEFINITELY PROCEEDING WITH PLANS TO MERGE AIR SIAM AND THAI INTERNATIONAL, PROBABLY NOT LATER THAN MARCH 1977. IN RESPONSE TO QUERY REGARDING RUMORS THAT GEN. KRIS SIWARA IS MAJOR STOCKHOLDER, THROUGH FRONTMAN, IN AIR SIAM, SRISOOK REPLIED RUMORS ARE BASED ON FACT THAT GEN. KRIS HAS "MADE IT KNOWN" TO MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS
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THAT ALL RTG AGENCIES SHOULD "HELP AIR SIAM", BUT, ALTHOUGH GEN. KRIS' BROTHER IS MEMBER OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS, THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT GEN. KRIS HAS FINANCIAL INTEREST IN AIR SIAM.
MASTERS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CIVIL AVIATION, DIPLOMATIC NOTES, MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 APR 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: RowellE0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BANGKO06717
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750136-0309
From: BANGKOK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750435/aaaabgly.tel
Line Count: 112
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: 75 STATE 78260
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: RowellE0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <15 JUL 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <18 NOV 2003 by RowellE0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CIVAIR: CONSULTATIONS
TAGS: EAIR, TH
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006